

**Manuscript version: Author's Accepted Manuscript**

The version presented in WRAP is the author's accepted manuscript and may differ from the published version or Version of Record.

**Persistent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/110589>

**How to cite:**

Please refer to published version for the most recent bibliographic citation information. If a published version is known of, the repository item page linked to above, will contain details on accessing it.

**Copyright and reuse:**

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions.

Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

**Publisher's statement:**

Please refer to the repository item page, publisher's statement section, for further information.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk).

# **THE SECRET LIFE OF IAN FLEMING: SPIES, LIES AND SOCIAL TIES**

## **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the fascinating interactions and experiences of James Bond creator, Ian Fleming, with the real world of intelligence. It has long been known that Fleming worked in Naval Intelligence during the Second World War. However, accounts of his time there tend to portray him as a lowly and slightly eccentric administrator. Drawing on newly-discovered archival materials, plus memoirs and histories, it is argued here that Fleming was a respected and influential figure in the great game of espionage for some three decades. During the war, he was a central cog in the machinery of naval intelligence: planning operations; working with partners in American intelligence; and liaising with secret Whitehall departments, including the Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park. Before and after the war, he was involved in a range of intelligence networks, often using journalistic cover to hide his clandestine connections. Throughout his life, his social circle was a ‘who’s who’ of spies and saboteurs, including CIA Director Allen Dulles. In short, he straddled the state-private divide. Taken together, these dealings with real intelligence paved the way for and gave veracity to his fiction, which continues to shape public perceptions of intelligence to this day.

**KEYWORDS:** Ian Fleming; British Intelligence; Second World War; Cold War; CIA

It has long been known that Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, worked in British Naval Intelligence during the Second World War. Published on 13 April 1953, his first novel, *Casino Royale*, included a potted biography mentioning this fact. Moreover, he liked to hint at his wartime skulduggery in letters to fans and well-wishers.<sup>1</sup> Less well known, however, is what tasks he performed and how important these and other real intelligence experiences were in influencing his creation of 007. The conventional wisdom suggests that he was fairly low on the organizational flowchart, a thirty-something upstart within the hallowed walls of the Admiralty, working in a backroom with no access to real secrets. John Sutherland has written disparagingly that ‘all he commanded was in-trays, out-trays and ashtrays’.<sup>2</sup> John Pearson’s excellent biography tells us that Fleming liked to inflate his importance by carrying a commando knife, engraved with his name and rank, and insinuating darkly that it served him well in the field. In reality, he simply used it for opening letters and cutting his fingernails.<sup>3</sup> Fleming’s friends unkindly dubbed him a ‘chocolate sailor’ – a jibe repeated by newspaper magnate Lord Beaverbrook – who never served at sea or saw battle on a ship.<sup>4</sup> Mockingly, they accused him of sitting behind a desk all day, concocting fanciful ploys to stick it to Hitler that were immediately dismissed by his exasperated superiors. Strikingly, whereas the espionage experiences of more ‘serious’ writers of spy fiction such as Graham Greene, Somerset Maugham, and John le Carré are generally held in high regard by historians, who portray them as professionals that made a difference,<sup>5</sup> Fleming has been cast as a ‘rank amateur’ and pen pusher.<sup>6</sup>

This assessment stands in need of significant revision. In the public domain, there now exists archival material relating to Fleming’s intelligence experiences. This information about his secret life includes declassified government records but also several collections of private papers, composed of unpublished personal diaries, correspondence and clippings written by people who knew or interacted with him. Interestingly, a great deal of this material

has been publicly accessible for some time. The question of why it has remained largely under-utilised is open to speculation, but might be because it is fragmentary in nature and dispersed across multiple locations, internationally, meaning that the researcher has to perform the role of scavenger or beachcomber (or even secret agent!) to access it. Sadly, there is no single 'Fleming Archive'; rather, there is a mass of what social historian Raphael Samuel once described as 'thin shrivelled tissues' that can be held in the hand.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this disparate documentary spoor, there also exists a spate of intelligence memoirs and popular histories, both old and new, many of which contain nuggets of revealing information about his spy connections.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing on these publications, as well as the scattered archival record, this article will demonstrate that Fleming was far more involved at the sharp end of the spy war than he has been given credit. As personal assistant to Admiral John Godfrey, the hard-driving Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), he was entrusted with many of the nation's vital secrets, including the holiest of holies, that of codebreaking at Bletchley Park. With a sharp mind, the right connections, and the inimitable confidence of an Old Etonian, he was given responsibilities and privileges that far exceeded his title of personal assistant, including the running of agents and the devising of special operations (or 'plots' as he called them).<sup>9</sup> Despite his youth and raffish ways, he was an expert to whom senior figures, on both sides of the Atlantic, trusted and looked to for assistance and inspiration. He even participated in meetings of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), which oversaw and gave direction to all aspects of Britain's national security.

Advancing the existing literature in another direction, it will be argued that Fleming's intelligence 'career' went well beyond the Second World War, spanning some three decades. In the 1930s, it will be shown that he put his Russian language skills to good use with some freelance spy work in Moscow, earning praise from the Foreign Office. After 1945, as he

matured into an internationally renowned author, he enjoyed close links with a range of senior intelligence officers, both serving and retired, most notably Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Allen Dulles who was not only a fan, but also remarkably sought his counsel on the intelligence challenges of the day. Fleming even had a flattering nickname for Dulles – ‘Agent 008’.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the largely self-evident value of providing new insights on a figure of enduring public fascination, a full and accurate exploration of Fleming’s secret past is valuable because, as historian David Cannadine has written, it gave him an insider’s view of the obscure half-lit work of intelligence and ‘It was out of these experiences, memories, and sensations that he would later create and elaborate the world of James Bond’.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it was while working for Naval Intelligence in 1944 that he told a friend that, after demobilisation, he would ‘write the spy story to end all spy stories’.<sup>12</sup> Later in life, with characteristic aplomb, he declared that: ‘I extracted the Bond plots from my wartime memories, dolled them up, attached a hero, a villain, and there was the book’.<sup>13</sup> For more than 50 years, the James Bond phenomenon has been instrumental in creating a powerful cultural imaginary of intelligence, which, rightly or wrongly, and not without disapproval from certain intelligence professionals and literary critics, has helped to shape public perceptions of spying around the world.<sup>14</sup> For tens of millions of people, as le Carré once remarked, albeit through gritted teeth, ‘Spy meant Bond’.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, it is important to understand in its fullest context how this thick signifier of meaning about intelligence came to be and tease out the curious co-constitutive nature of the interconnections between Fleming, Bond, and ‘real’ secret intelligence.

Ian Fleming was born on 28 May 1908 into a family of great wealth and influence connected to the successful merchant bank Robert Fleming & Co. His father, Valentine, was Conservative Member of Parliament for Henley from 1910 and, until his death on the Western Front in 1917, was a good friend of Winston Churchill. Having been educated at Eton, one of England's most exclusive independent schools, where students were groomed to be leaders of men, as well as the elite royal military academy Sandhurst and the universities of Munich and Geneva, Ian eventually took a job in October 1931 as sub-editor and journalist with the international news agency Reuters. It was in this capacity that Fleming was first drawn into the clandestine life. In March 1933, he was dispatched to Moscow to cover the Stalinist show trial of 6 British engineers working for Metro-Vickers who were accused of espionage and industrial sabotage against the Soviet Union. Interestingly, Fleming was chosen for the job on the strength of his Russian, which he had learned at The Tennerhof, an Austrian finishing school for troubled rich kids run by Major Ernan Forbes-Dennis, formerly an MI6 station chief in Marseilles.<sup>16</sup>

Invited to watch the trial from the press benches, Fleming scooped his rival journalists by dropping his reports from the window of the upstairs courtroom to a boy standing below in the freezing cold who hurried them to the nearest telegraph office. On the day of the verdict, showing the skills of a saboteur, he cut the wires of all the court telephones, save one, to ensure that he was first to deliver the news back to London.<sup>17</sup> His inventiveness in scooping his competitors stunned his fellow reporters, with Linton Wells of the International News Service calling him a 'pukka chap' who had 'given all of us a run for our money'.<sup>18</sup> With typical boldness, Fleming even tried to secure an interview with Soviet leader Josef Stalin. Although his request was turned down, he was rewarded with a signed letter of refusal, which

he then used to bluff his way out of awkward situations with Soviet authorities.<sup>19</sup> Importantly, his Moscow assignment impressed Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, who arranged for him to brief the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and key diplomats on what he had observed.<sup>20</sup>

Later in the decade, with his name known in the right places, Fleming was asked by SIS to accompany a trade delegation to Moscow under the cover of ‘special correspondent’ for *The Times*.<sup>21</sup> While on the job, he befriended Sefton Delmer, then a reporter for the *Daily Express*, who later became chief black propagandist for the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) during the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> By his own telling, Delmer quickly realised that Fleming was ‘no ordinary journalist’ and was most likely ‘on some intelligence job or other’, for he always ‘made such a determined show of typing away whenever the Russians were looking’.<sup>23</sup> During the train journey out of Russia, on the Warsaw Express, Delmer memorised his notes and threw them out of the window. His companion joked: ‘Why don’t you swallow them? That’s what all the best spies do!’<sup>24</sup> At the border, at Negeloroje, white-gloved customs officials took a particular interest in Fleming, escorting him into a private room to carry out a full body strip search. Whereas they ‘hardly glanced’ at Delmer’s luggage, they ‘took everything out of [Fleming’s] bags, examined the valises themselves for double bottoms, and held everything up to the light’.<sup>25</sup> Before the ordeal was over, they had seized a box of Russian condoms from his luggage, which he was transporting to government scientists for testing. ‘You should have swallowed them’, muttered Delmer.<sup>26</sup> Touché.

Back in London, Fleming produced a report entitled ‘Russia’s Strengths: Some Cautionary Notes’. In it, he praised Russian military strength – claiming that ‘these tough, grey-faced little men are a vastly different force from the ill-equipped gun fodder of 1914’ – but warned against relying on Stalin as an ally, explaining that he ‘would not hesitate to stab us in the back the moment it suited’ him. The ‘threat of a territorial world war’, he wrote

prophetically, ‘should not blind us to the ideological struggle which will have to come one day’.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, while *The Times* dismissed the report and declined to publish it, the intelligence community was impressed. At the outbreak of the war, having shown an aptitude for the business of defending the realm, Fleming was headhunted by John Godfrey, the softly spoken, but always demanding, Director of Naval Intelligence, to become his personal assistant with the rank of lieutenant. As befitting the clubbable nature of British intelligence at this time, he was recruited over lunch in the grill at the luxury Carlton Hotel on the corner of Haymarket and Pall Mall.<sup>28</sup>

## II

Quickly promoted to commander, with three gold stripes on his sleeve, Fleming found himself at the heart of the British intelligence machine. As the intelligence arm of the Admiralty, the Naval Intelligence Division (NID) was a hub of cryptographers, cartographers, interrogators, and attachés.<sup>29</sup> In his role, Fleming communicated with agents in Occupied territory; studied purloined documents and maps; monitored German radio broadcasts; coordinated aerial reconnaissance to locate enemy vessels; handled press enquiries, keeping enterprising journalists off the scent; and read transcripts of interrogations of spies and captured German naval officers.

Sometimes, it was Fleming himself who performed the interrogations. Unconventional at best, his favoured method for gleaning information was to dress the detainee in civvies and take him to Scott’s, a seafood restaurant considered to be one of the most glamorous in the West End of London, where they would enjoy cordon bleu cooking and the finest wines. On one occasion, an unwitting waiter eavesdropped on the conversation



and, alarmed by the hushed tones being exchanged in German, telephoned Scotland Yard. The next thing Fleming knew, he and his guest, a German U-Boat Commander, who was spilling secrets and too drunk to care, were encircled by Special Branch officers and bundled into an armoured vehicle. Comically, the ordeal only ended when a senior figure from the Admiralty could be found to authenticate Fleming's identity and version of events.<sup>30</sup> It has since been reported that it was in this same restaurant that Fleming discovered the dry martini, 'shaken not stirred', which would become 007's drink of choice.<sup>31</sup>

Fleming was much more than an assistant at NID. His desk, 17F, which overlooked Horse Guards Parade, was six feet from the door to Godfrey's oak panelled office, so as to be within earshot and instant call of his chief. No one entered without his permission – not even the Prime Minister.<sup>32</sup> What Godfrey knew, Fleming knew: 'My idea was that I would tell Ian everything so that if anything happened to me there would be one man who would know what was going on – he could ensure the continuity of the department'.<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere, Godfrey remarked that 'Ian should have been the D.N.I and I his naval adviser'.<sup>34</sup> Such was Fleming's elevated status, he even had the power to read messages meant for his boss and reply to the sender: 'No importance – 17F'.<sup>35</sup>

With his easy manners, charm, and social confidence, plus a personality that made him as much at home with thinkers as with men of action, he became Godfrey's designated liaison with a range of secret government departments. These included the PWE, the Security Service (MI5), SIS, the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) at Bletchley Park, and the Special Operations Executive (SOE), whose trainers he later boasted taught him how to kill a person by biting the back of their neck.<sup>36</sup> Impressively, he was afforded the privilege of being 'indoctrinated' into the so-called Ultra secret, the codename for the breaking of the German Enigma machine. Nothing in Whitehall was guarded more closely; indeed, only half of Winston Churchill's War Cabinet knew the secret, which was kept hidden for some three

decades after the end of the war.<sup>37</sup> Fleming's Admiralty diaries – still classified but shown to Graham Moore, the screenplay writer of the 2014 film *The Imitation Game* – reveal that he devised operations based on Bletchley intelligence and had dealings with Alan Turing, the Cambridge mathematician who was instrumental in breaking the Enigma codes.<sup>38</sup> Remarkably, he also chaired meetings of Britain's senior intelligence assessment body, the JIC, when the official chairman Bill Cavendish-Bentinck was unavailable.<sup>39</sup> In short, he was in the inner sanctum, which was no mean feat given the cloistered and closed nature of British intelligence at the time.<sup>40</sup>

While his primary job was to be Godfrey's eyes and ears in Whitehall, Fleming did on occasion get out into the field, although given the sensitive knowledge in his possession, he was understandably banned from the front line, where the risk of capture was high. In early June 1940, with the capitulation of France all but certain, he travelled to a grand château in the Loire Valley where Admiral Jean-François Darlan, commander-in-chief of the French Navy, was taking temporary shelter. His assignment – on the Prime Minister's orders, no less – was to persuade Darlan to hand over the French fleet, the fourth largest navy in the world, and sail it to England. To tempt the proud and notoriously prickly admiral, an Anglophone whose great-grandfather had died at the Battle of Trafalgar, Fleming suggested to his superiors the idea of trading the Isle of Wight to the French for the duration of the war. As Ben Macintyre has written, one can only imagine how inhabitants of the island would have reacted to waking up under the French flag.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, the scheme was rejected. Before a deal about the French fleet could be struck, the Luftwaffe began bombing the château and the two men were forced to flee. By late June, France had surrendered and with no agreement in place, the British had no option but to shell and torpedo the precious armada to prevent it from falling into Nazi hands.<sup>42</sup>

A born adventurer who was easily bored and perpetually restless, Fleming found a natural home in naval intelligence, which encouraged the blue skies thinking that he loved. Not content with 'passive' intelligence work, he enjoyed developing crazy schemes to outfox and beat the Germans – ideas from a rich imagination that would later be put to similar use in devising the plot lines for his Bond novels. Godfrey later opined that Fleming possessed a 'marked flair' for planning operations.<sup>43</sup> In August 1942, prior to the Dieppe Raid, he proposed sinking a giant slab of concrete with men inside it into the English Channel. In the submerged pillbox, the men would watch the port using a periscope.<sup>44</sup> This idea was rejected, but others were approved. For example, worried that Nazi frogmen had fixed radar devices on wrecked vessels along the Kent Coast, Fleming successfully convinced the Admiralty to send its own divers to reconnoitre the sites.<sup>45</sup>

From declassified records, we know that Fleming was involved in the planning of Operation Mincemeat. This mission involved the successful attempt to disguise the impending Allied invasion of Sicily, by floating off the Spanish coast, as if he had died in a plane crash, the body of a dead tramp dressed as a Royal Marines officer carrying faked documents that pointed to an Allied attack on the eastern Mediterranean. Hitler fell for the ruse completely.<sup>46</sup> We also know that Fleming was the brainchild of 'Operation Ruthless'. The objective of this mission was to steal a German naval coding machine. The plan was that the RAF would capture a German bomber, staff it with a German-speaking crew in Luftwaffe uniforms, and stage a crash landing by the French coast. With this, a German rescue vessel would come to the scene, whereupon the fake flight team would kill the unsuspecting crew, dump the bodies overboard, and then make haste for England with the precious cryptographic cargo in their possession. In a memo to Godfrey, Fleming claimed that one of the counterfeit airmen would need to be a 'tough bachelor, able to swim' – an early prototype of 007 perhaps.<sup>47</sup>

With naval Enigma signals still to be being decoded, Turing was said to be delighted at the prospect of the 'pinch'. Preparations were made. Lord Beaverbrook provided a Dornier plane shot down in Scotland, over the Firth of Forth, while Fleming gave the flight team a cover story in the event the operation failed: 'Attackers story will be that it was done for a lark by a group of young hot-heads who thought the war was too tame and wanted to have a go at the Germans...This will prevent suspicions that the party was after more valuable booty than a rescue boat'.<sup>48</sup> At the eleventh hour, with a crew on standby and Fleming personally supervising preparations in Dover, the operation was cancelled due to bad weather. Moreover, concerns had been raised about whether suitable German craft were operating in the area. In his diary, Fleming wrote that prized codebreakers 'Turing and [Peter] Twinn came to me like undertakers cheated of a nice corpse...all in a stew about the cancellation of Operation Ruthless'.<sup>49</sup>

Operation Ruthless left Fleming with an idea: naval intelligence needed some hard men who could be sent into occupied territory ahead of the forwarding allied troops to steal valuable loot from under the enemy's nose.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, he created the '30 Unit Assault Squad' (30AU), an elite team of authorised pirates and thieves trained in key commando skills from parachuting, scuba diving, operating small boats, setting booby traps, and withstanding interrogation, to close-quarter combat with knives, knuckledusters and silenced pistols.<sup>51</sup>

Nicknamed the 'Red Indians', because their dangerous missions resembled the Native American hunting expeditions depicted in Hollywood westerns, Fleming managed the unit from London, issuing shopping lists of specialist material such as ciphers, codebooks, and weapon designs. Totalling 300 men and 25 officers by V-E Day, this rag-tag collection of tough soldiers and spies captured some significant bounties. Before Operation Torch, the Allied landings in Vichy-French North Africa, the team finally bagged Turing an Enigma

machine. Prior to the Normandy landings, the commandos procured vital intelligence on Nazi U-Boat pens along the northern French coast. After D-Day, they used high-speed Jeeps to race to enemy encampments before the retreating Germans could destroy high-grade documents and equipment. At the port city of Kiel, on Germany's Baltic Sea coast, they found the blueprints for a sophisticated machine designed to explode beach fortifications, known as 'Cleopatra'. They also grabbed a single person submarine with the rotting corpse of a crewman still inside, his lifeless eye stuck to the periscope.<sup>52</sup> Most impressively, in May 1945, they ransacked Tambach Castle, a Nazi outpost deep in the forests of Württemberg, capturing 100 tons of operational logs, war diaries and administrative records of the German Navy, dating back to the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>53</sup> According to 30AU member Robert Harling, the haul was so large that half-a-dozen 3-tonne lorries were needed to transport it to the port in Hamburg, where a fishing boat was then chartered to deliver it London.<sup>54</sup> Wartime naval intelligence veteran Donald McCormick has estimated that together these raids, carried out by men who were deaf to danger and had nine lives, 'enabled thousands of lives to be saved, probably tens of thousands'.<sup>55</sup>

### III

Fleming's most important wartime contribution involved his dealings with US intelligence. Throughout the war, he made numerous trips across the Atlantic to liaise with counterparts in the American Office of Naval Intelligence. During the early years of the war, these visits were to a large extent about trying to convince the Americans – not yet a spying superpower – to take intelligence more seriously.<sup>56</sup> At the time, Washington did not possess a permanent

espionage agency. Spying was viewed as being ‘un-American’, as evidenced by the decision to abolish the codebreaking organisation the ‘Black Chamber’ in 1929, which was accompanied by the famous admonition of US Secretary of State Henry Stimson that ‘gentlemen do not read other gentlemen’s mail’.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, Britain’s SIS had been established in 1909 and had roots dating back to Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>58</sup> One of Fleming’s earliest trips to the US was to present the Americans with mounting evidence of an Axis espionage network operating in the country. Among the spies British intelligence had identified was a woman who was known to patronize the basement bar of the Barbizon Plaza Hotel next to Central Park in New York City. ‘Keep away from her and see your friends do, too’, warned Fleming. ‘I am told’, he added, in a characterization that brings to mind the degrading representation of women that he would adopt in the Bond novels, ‘that her bedroom conduct is totally reprehensible and unrewarding’.<sup>59</sup>

By the spring of 1941, known only to a few members of President Roosevelt’s administration, Washington and London had agreed to greater intelligence sharing.<sup>60</sup> As a result, Godfrey and Fleming travelled to the US in May on a Top Secret mission to fine tune the arrangements. The trip was eventful. An overnight layover in Lisbon saw them kill time at the Estoril Casino, where Fleming gambled away his escudos at the chemin-de-fer table against two Portuguese businessmen he suspected might be Nazi spies. ‘While there’, he later recorded, ‘I recognized some German agents, and I thought it would be a brilliant coup to play with them, break them, take their money’.<sup>61</sup> Fleming’s plan to win the game and deal a blow to Hitler’s war chest failed, but the episode was the inspiration for Bond’s deadly game of baccarat against the Benzadrine-sniffing villain Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale* (1952). The next day, the two men donned civilian suits and crossed the Atlantic on a six-engine Dixie-Clipper, hoping to sneak into New York unnoticed. However, as they disembarked, a swarm of paparazzi was there to photograph a fellow passenger, the Italian fashion designer Madame

Elsa Schiaparelli who had arrived to open a haute couture establishment in the city. That evening, a picture of the couturier, with the secret spy chief and his personal assistant in the background, featured on the front page of *The New York Times*. Thankfully, they were not identified.<sup>62</sup>

In New York, Fleming was introduced to the Canadian-born millionaire industrialist and former lightweight boxing champion Sir William Stephenson, Britain's top intelligence official in the US, who headed the British Security Coordination (BSC). Headquartered on the 36<sup>th</sup> floor of the Rockefeller Center, the BSC was the operational and liaison arm of SIS in the Americas. With his contacts in American industry and government, Stephenson worked covertly to mobilise pro-British opinion and convince the American people that a war with Hitler's Germany was worth fighting. To this end, the BSC planted anti-German stories in the US media and waged a harassment campaign against pro-Nazi and isolationist groups. Fleming struck an instant rapport with the diminutive Stephenson – or 'Little Bill' as he was known – and indeed later published a letter in *The Sunday Times* claiming that Bond was a 'highly romanticised' roman-à-clef of the spy chief.<sup>63</sup> A cryptic nod to the BSC also featured in *Casino Royale*, when Bond tells Mathis that his first kill in pursuit of his '00' status was a 'Japanese cipher expert cracking our codes on the thirty-sixth floor of the R.C.A. building in the Rockefeller centre'.<sup>64</sup>

Through Stephenson, Fleming was schooled at 'Camp X', a paramilitary training facility on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario. Reportedly, he was excellent with a sub-machine gun and achieved top marks in an underwater exercise that involved attaching a limpet mine, undetected, in frogmen-infested waters, to the hull of an oil tanker.<sup>65</sup> He also successfully planted a fake bomb inside a Toronto power station; while the other trainees made botched attempts using the cover of nightfall or by donning disguises, Fleming

succeeded by wearing his best threads and arranging a meeting with the managing director, posing as a visiting British engineer.<sup>66</sup>

From New York, Godfrey and Fleming travelled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Stephenson's inseparable friend and companion in intelligence, the imposing General William Donovan, who Stephenson called 'Big Bill'. President Roosevelt had recently selected Donovan to head the office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), a new civilian agency to oversee US intelligence collection and analytic efforts. Evidence tantalizingly suggests that whilst in the nation's capital Fleming wrote the memorandum that evolved into the blueprint for the COI and its two successors, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the CIA, created in 1942 and 1947 respectively. According to NID veteran Patrick Beesly, 'Fleming drafted plans which led to the creation of the O.S.S.'<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere, Fleming's childhood friend Ivar Bryce, who worked for Stephenson in Washington, has written that Fleming penned the memorandum – 'under armed guard around the clock' – in just over two days in long-hand in a room in the new annex of the British Embassy.<sup>68</sup> Dated 27 June 1941 and stretching to some 70 pages, the document outlined how a new US agency should be structured and staffed, drawing heavily from the British model and experience. 'For what they are worth', the opening line read, 'I have prepared a few notes on some steps which will have to be taken at an early stage in order that your organisation can be set up in time to meet war before Christmas'.<sup>69</sup> It is fascinating to note that Fleming worked on the assumption that the US would join the war 'before Christmas', which is precisely what happened following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December.

Well aware that spying attracted a certain squeamishness in the US, Fleming was tactful in the document to avoid anything that smacked of creating an American Gestapo or might give the impression of con men and mindless assassins, thriving on danger and killing at will.<sup>70</sup> Fearful of the reaction from what he considered old-maidish congressmen who still



viewed intelligence as a dirty business, there was no hint of American intelligence following what he called the ‘Sidney Reilly School of Espionage’, in honour of the master spy who worked for British intelligence after the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>71</sup> Elsewhere in the document, he suggested that publishing magnate Henry Luce of *Time* magazine would be a good choice to lead the organisation. He also warned that ‘cajolery’ and ‘dragooning’ would be needed to gain the cooperation and trust of rival agencies, including J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI and the State Department.<sup>72</sup> In recognition of his efforts, Donovan gave Fleming a six-round cylinder .38-caliber Colt Police Positive Revolver, inscribed with the words ‘For Special Services’.<sup>73</sup> In the novel *Casino Royale*, Bond keeps a similar handgun, with a sawn rather than full-length barrel, under his pillow while he sleeps.

The motivating factors that led to the creation of the CIA in 1947 have been much debated in US intelligence literature, with some suggesting that it grew out of the failure to forestall the assault on Pearl Harbor and the desire to prevent another surprise attack, and others linking its genesis to the Cold War and President Truman’s eagerness to counter the menacing expansionism of the Soviet Union.<sup>74</sup> While it would be inaccurate to call Fleming the ‘father’ of the CIA or to suggest that his blueprint was the decisive factor, it is clear that his contribution should not be overlooked, for he was involved in the discussions at precisely the moment when ideas that led to its establishment were being formed.

#### IV

Following demobilisation in May 1945, Fleming contemplated taking a job with MI5 or SIS, a path taken by many wartime intelligence officers.<sup>75</sup> Instead, he became Foreign Manager of Kemsley newspapers, which at the time comprised some thirty newspapers and whose

flagship was the prestigious *Sunday Times*. He took the position in preference to continued formal intelligence work because he successfully bartered two months of paid holiday, giving him time to fulfil two ambitions: to build a house called Goldeneye in Jamaica, a country he fell in love with during a wartime U-Boat conference; and to write the ‘spy story to end all spy stories’<sup>76</sup>.

However, Fleming never truly left the intelligence world. When his commission in the Royal Naval Reserve came up for renewal in 1951, he appealed unsuccessfully to the NID for a special exemption from the mandatory fortnight’s training, writing suggestively: ‘I am engaged throughout the year in running a worldwide intelligence organisation...I also carry out a number of tasks on behalf of a department of the Foreign Office’.<sup>77</sup> At Kemsley, he launched the ‘Mercury’ news service, named after the Roman messenger god. Officially, Mercury provided articles across the Kemsley Empire; unofficially, it was a nest of spies that supplied incidental intelligence.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Fleming had a canary-yellow world map on his office wall with pins and dotted lines demonstrating the locations and reach of the agents he was running.<sup>79</sup> Many of the ‘journalists’ he sent around the world had intelligence backgrounds, whilst others were on SIS’s payroll under the cover of being foreign correspondents. Cedric Salter, who he sent to Barcelona, was SOE. Donald McCormick, a stringer in Tangier, had been in Naval Intelligence; so too Stephen Coulter. Anthony Terry, the newspaper’s man in Bonn, was an intelligence officer in Vienna and Berlin. Indeed, according to Terry’s then wife, Fleming had personally arranged her husband’s cover in Germany.<sup>80</sup> According to McCormick, correspondents were required to submit ‘Sitreps’ – the name given to the wartime Situation Reports Centre that collated intelligence from abroad – providing information about what was happening in their corner of the globe. At Fleming’s discretion, this ‘eyes only’ material was ‘passed on to branches of Intelligence as and when this seemed justified’.<sup>81</sup>

For the remainder of his life, Fleming enjoyed informal contacts with many intelligence personnel. He and his wife, Ann, mingled with renowned culture critic Malcolm Muggeridge, who had worked for SIS during the war, stationed in Portuguese Mozambique. Despite their mutual connections to wartime spying, Muggeridge was less than complimentary about Fleming, writing in his diary after one evening with the couple at Victoria Square in London that it was ‘difficult to see why Ann fell for him’, adding that Ian was a ‘slob’ who treated her with ‘old-fashioned playfulness, with remarks like “Now don’t you go worrying your pretty little head about that”, which, oddly, she appeared to like’.<sup>82</sup> Muggeridge later angered Fleming’s family by publicly attacking the spy writer within a few months of his death, calling him an ‘Etonian Mickey Spillane’ and describing Bond as nothing more than the author’s ‘squalid...glamorized view of himself’.<sup>83</sup>

For Fleming, a deeper and more loyal friendship came in the form of the Scottish diplomat, British army Brigadier, and writer Sir Fitzroy Maclean, who is often mentioned as one of the inspirations for James Bond. A tall, handsome and imposing figure, dubbed ‘Lothario in a kilt’ (on account of his fondness for Highland dress),<sup>84</sup> Maclean had made a name for himself during the early part of the war as a founding member of the elite Special Air Service (SAS), performing daredevil exploits behind the lines in North Africa. Later, in 1943, he was chosen as Churchill’s special envoy to liaise with Tito’s partisans in Yugoslavia. A man who knew no fear, whose motto in life was that it is better to live a day as a tiger than a year as a donkey, he has been described as a ‘real-life imperial adventurer in the tradition of Kim and Richard Hannay and an action man in the mould of Sir Richard Burton and, his own special hero, Bonnie Prince Charlie’.<sup>85</sup> After the war, with the character of Bond starting to form in his mind, Fleming was in regular contact with Maclean. In Box 79 of Maclean’s private papers, held at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, is a photograph of the two men enjoying an afternoon together in

the English countryside, drinking coffee.<sup>86</sup> In May 1949, Fleming corresponded with Maclean over the latter's forthcoming autobiography *Eastern Approaches*, encouraging the Brigadier to remove passages that he perceived as being too pompous. As Fleming wrote in a letter to the book's publisher, Jonathan Cape, while Parts I and II were 'beautifully written', 'of absorbing interest', and full of 'excellent adventure material', Part III was 'spoilt by the patronising note which Fitzroy allowed to creep in and by traces of hubris which are not in the tradition of such books by Englishman'.<sup>87</sup> After publication, Fleming ensured that the book was positively reviewed in *The Sunday Times*.<sup>88</sup>

Fleming enjoyed a close post-war friendship with former SOE Head, Major-General Sir Colin Gubbins. One of the interesting consequences of this friendship was that it gave Fleming a voice in the secret world. In July 1949, he urged Gubbins to write a popular history of SOE, commenting that 'The work of SOE really deserves such a monument'.<sup>89</sup> Such a book, he explained, would also serve as a 'stopper' to some of the 'dreadful stories' that had appeared about the organisation since the end of the war, which included accusations that SOE leadership had sent scores of its own agents, including women officers, to almost certain death, either through rank incompetence or, more sinisterly, in the service of playing a higher game, such as protecting the secret that the British had blown the German double-cross network.<sup>90</sup> Fleming pressed Gubbins several times about the book, declaring that *The Sunday Times* would pay a 'quite considerable fee' for the serialisation rights and commenting 'you are the only person who could do this and who would also have the confidence of the Ministry of Defence as far as security matters were concerned'.<sup>91</sup> Although Gubbins ultimately declined, Fleming's novel suggestion was raised among numerous senior authorities, including Lord Selborne, the former Minister of Economic Warfare and political head of SOE.<sup>92</sup> Over the 1950s the idea of official public history germinated and flourished, with a breakthrough volume on SOE activities in France, authored by M.R.D. Foot,

eventually being published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1966.<sup>93</sup> Indirectly, therefore, Fleming played a part in breaking down the taboo in Britain about discussing official intelligence work in public, a shift in intelligence culture that he would press still further with his own spy fiction.

Fleming socialised at Godfrey's 36 Club, named after the DNI's official residence at 36 Curzon Street, which has been described by Andrew Lycett as a 'think-tank for intelligence honed brains' and the preferred watering hole for naval intelligence officers.<sup>94</sup> Here, Godfrey tried unsuccessfully to convince his old assistant to write his biography, eventually completed in 1970 by fellow NID veteran Patrick Beesly.<sup>95</sup> Fleming did, however, complete writing tasks for other intelligence professionals. In 1957, he wrote the preface to *The Education of a Poker Player* by notorious US cryptologist Herbert Yardley, author of the 1931 tell-all book *The American Black Chamber*, which had outraged American authorities.<sup>96</sup> Also in 1957, at the request of former MI5 Director-General Sir Percy Sillitoe, he published an account of how the International Diamond Security Organisation, which had been run by Sillitoe after his retirement from MI5, had stopped the illicit diamond trade from Sierra Leone. Entitled *The Diamond Smugglers*, the book was written in two weeks in Tangiers, based on ten days of interviews with ex-MI5 officer John Collard who had been recruited by De Beers to break the smuggling ring. To protect Collard's identity, he was given the pseudonym 'John Blaize'.<sup>97</sup> In 1962, Fleming wrote the introduction to *The Quiet Canadian*, Montgomery Hyde's authorised biography of William Stephenson.<sup>98</sup> He and Stephenson, a fellow resident of Jamaica, had remained good friends since the war. Along with playwright Noël Coward, newspaper proprietor Lord Beaverbrook, and old SIS hand Sir William Wiseman, they lived on the exclusive north shore of the island, overlooking Montego Bay, and were known as 'Jamaica's Yale Club'.

One of the closest relationships cultivated by Fleming after the war was with CIA Director Allen Dulles, who presided over the Agency during its purported ‘Golden Age’ of covert action, from 1953 to 1961.<sup>99</sup> They first met in London at a dinner party arranged by some members of British intelligence. ‘We had quite a night of it’, Dulles recollected some years later. ‘Fleming was a brilliant and witty talker, with ideas on everything. Before we got through, we had pretty well torn orthodox intelligence to pieces... ‘Ever since that night, I kept in constant touch with him’.<sup>100</sup>

That the two men became such good friends is not altogether surprising. Both were the products of elite education with family traditions of political engagement in public office. Dulles was related to three US Secretaries of State – his grandfather, John Watson Foster under President Benjamin Harrison; his uncle Robert Lansing under President Woodrow Wilson; and his brother John Foster Dulles, who served President Dwight D. Eisenhower alongside him and in whose shadow he believed he laboured. Educated at Princeton, where he made Phi Beta Kappa, he became a Wall Street corporate lawyer, practicing for 15 years, before joining the OSS. As discussed earlier, Fleming similarly came from a family of distinguished heritage and power.

The parallels between the two men did not end there. Both Dulles and Fleming knew everyone, would meet everyone, and enjoyed peripatetic lives of travel and adventure. Beneath their charm and friendly manner, both possessed an emotional coldness, played by their own rules, and were single-minded and manipulative in getting what they wanted, including female company. Dulles had a notorious wandering eye and pursued a remarkable sequence of ‘Other Women’, including Queen Frederika of Greece with whom he was once reportedly caught red-handed in a dressing room next to his CIA office.<sup>101</sup> Fleming was also a serial womaniser, much like his fictitious creation; from sleeping with the wives of aristocrats to contracting an STD from a prostitute, he did it all. More importantly, both Dulles and

Fleming were passionate believers in the importance of defeating communism and strong advocates of the righteousness and necessity of covert operations in pursuit of this goal. In short, they were naturally drawn to each other.

James Bond was one of the Dulles' guilty pleasures. The spymaster had a complete set of signed hardback 007 novels in his library and, intriguingly, even sent typed notes about them to fellow Bond enthusiast President John F. Kennedy.<sup>102</sup> In public, he often talked glowingly about 007 – his favourite quip being that he wished the CIA had half a dozen James Bonds.<sup>103</sup> As Dulles later confessed, 'some of the professionals working for me [at CIA]...never could quite understand this weakness of the boss', calling him a 'bit soft-headed'.<sup>104</sup> The reason for the 'weakness' was actually rather simple. Dulles liked Bond because the series contained the right sort of takeaways about spying and drew the public's attention away from what was really going on. Dedicated, loyal, and above all patriotic agents that kept the world safe, with high risk and little reward, was the image of the spy business that Dulles, the consummate espionage marketer, wanted the public to have. 'Bond', Dulles enthused on one occasion, '[has] got patriotic feeling. He's part of the *Service*. That's something I tried to build up when I was the Director – *esprit de corps*'.<sup>105</sup> In Bond, the end justified the means – and the means were fun. This was precisely what Dulles wanted the public to believe. The more people believed that secret intelligence was of vital national importance, carried out by dashing and heroic men like Bond, the fewer awkward questions there would be about what was really going on, which, in Dulles's era, included the fomenting of coups in Iran and Guatemala and the controversial subsidising of student associations and other notionally 'private' groups.<sup>106</sup>

So highly did Dulles value Bond's propagandising of the intelligence mission that when, in 1963, word spread that Fleming was contemplating retiring or even killing off 007, he wrote to author in protest: 'I hope you have not really destroyed our old friend and

colleague James Bond'.<sup>107</sup> Envious of British success in the spy fiction field, Dulles later became fascinated with the idea of an American James Bond. Eventually, he turned to his old Executive Assistant and CIA covert operations specialist E. Howard Hunt, a talented novelist who had won the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in 1946 to support his writing, to see what could be done. Using the pseudonym David St. John, Hunt duly produced a series of spy thrillers featuring the Bond-like CIA hero, Peter Ward, between 1965 and 1971. Sadly for Dulles, the nine novels never gained the same level of popularity and influence as 007. Despite Hunt's literary abilities, the books soon became overshadowed by his more famous exploits as the Nixon aide who recruited the burglars and organised the break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate complex in 1972. After the scandal broke and Hunt was jailed for his involvement, the Peter Ward series was repackaged with the legend 'Convicted Watergate Conspirator' emblazoned above Hunt's name, now-revealed as the true author of the books. In the *New York Review of Books*, Gore Vidal assessed Hunt's collected works and referred to him as the 'Shakespeare of the CIA', although the accolade is clearly meant disparagingly since Vidal is characteristically scathing of his subject's 'literary competence'.<sup>108</sup>

Dulles was captivated by 'Q-Branch' – the fictional 'toy shop' in the Bond novels and films where scientists in white coats worked through the night to develop life-saving gadgetry for agents in the field. In an interview for *Life* magazine in August 1964, he made the remarkable admission that as DCI he had been desperate to emulate Bond's gadget-powered success and had even tasked his engineers at CIA with trying to replicate as many of these fantastical bits of kit as physics would allow. According to Dulles, he had been particularly keen to reproduce the pocket size homing beacon which, in the film *Goldfinger* (1964), Sean Connery's Bond hides in the villain's Rolls Royce to track its whereabouts: 'I put my people in CIA to work on this as a serious project, but they came up with the answer that it had too



many bugs in it. The device really didn't work very well when the enemy got into a crowded city'.<sup>109</sup> In a wonderful case of life imitating art, Dulles reported that his scientists fared much better when it came to developing Rosa Klebb's infamous poison-tipped dagger shoe, from the novel *From Russia With Love* (1957). Sadly, he did not reveal whether the fatal footwear was ever used in the field.

Although the evidence is patchy, there are beguiling hints that Dulles sought Fleming's counsel on operational matters. On 13 March 1960, Fleming wangled himself an invitation to the Georgetown home of then presidential candidate John F. Kennedy, who was hosting a dinner party. The guest list for the evening was a veritable 'who's who' of well-connected Washingtonians. Along for the evening were senior CIA man John Bross and syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop who was secretly part of the CIA's cultural Cold War apparatus, penning articles that criticised communism while celebrating American interventionism overseas.

Fuelled by brandy, post-prandial conversation was particularly lively, with Kennedy asking Fleming, in the spirit of jest, 'what would Bond do' about Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro? Never one to pass up a challenge, Fleming declared that killing Castro was not enough; his regime had to be tainted in the eyes of the Cuban people. To achieve this, he proposed a three-fold plan. Stage one would involve the CIA flooding the streets of Havana with bundles of counterfeit money, accompanied by notes saying 'compliments of the United States'. Following this, high-altitude American spy planes would drop pamphlets out of the sky claiming that radioactivity, caused by atomic testing, was attracted to men with beards and caused impotence. To protect their virility, Fleming suggested, the barbudos would be forced to shave their macho facial hair, thus severing a symbolic link to the revolution. The plan would culminate with the CIA projecting some sort of large religious object over the Havana skyline, ideally a crucifix, to imply divine disapproval of the communist regime.

Enraptured by Fleming's imaginative suggestions, Kennedy and his guests roared with laughter.<sup>110</sup>

The following day, at CIA headquarters, Bross told Dulles about Fleming's seemingly harebrained ideas. To his astonishment, rather than see the funny side, Dulles took them with deadly seriousness, not least since they resonated with schemes already being formulated by the Agency's Technical Services and more broadly echoed his philosophy that unconventional thinking would be needed to break the stalemate with the Soviet Union and win the Cold War. Anxious to discover more, Dulles tried to get Fleming to Langley, but the author had already left Washington.<sup>111</sup> Sadly this is where the story ends, at least as far as publicly available sources exist.

While it would be foolish to infer from this evidence that Fleming was the architect of JFK's Cuba policy, it is clear that his blue skies thinking was not out of place as far as real policy was concerned and may even have influenced the various schemes that were adopted to try to undermine the Cuban revolution. In the 1960s, the CIA's covert actions against Castro – Operation Mongoose – bore an uncanny resemblance to Fleming's dinner party suggestions. During the Church Committee hearings in the mid-1970s into CIA misdeeds and dirty tricks, it was revealed in public testimony that the Agency, very much in the spirit of Fleming, had considered shooting starshells into the sky from a US submarine off Havana, to convince the locals that the Second Coming was at hand.<sup>112</sup> While we may never know Fleming's exact contribution to Mongoose, if indeed there was one at all, it is interesting to note that the Soviets focused on the relationship between Fleming and the CIA in their propaganda war with Washington. 'Fleming's best friend is Allen Dulles', the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* reported in April 1962. 'Dulles', it went on, 'even attempted (but unsuccessfully) to try methods recommended by Fleming in his books. American

propagandists must be in a bad way if they have recourse to the help of an English retired spy turned mediocre writer'.<sup>113</sup>

In the later Bond novels, appreciative of Dulles's friendship and public advocacy of James Bond, Fleming slipped complimentary references to the CIA into the text, which in turn were welcomed by the Agency as it sought to improve its public profile after the Bay of Pigs fiasco in April 1961, when a group of Cuban émigrés, backed by the CIA, had failed to provoke an uprising to bring about Castro's removal.<sup>114</sup> In *Thunderball* (1961), for example, Bond's boss 'M' enthuses: 'We've teamed up with the CIA to cover the world. Allen Dulles is putting every man he's got onto it and so am I'.<sup>115</sup> In *You Only Live Twice* (1964), Dulles is referred to benevolently as the 'old fox'.<sup>116</sup> And, in *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1965), Fleming even promotes Dulles's new book. Recuperating from his duel with Scaramanga, the text notes that Bond was 'sitting in his chair, a towel around his waist, reading Allen Dulles's *The Craft of Intelligence*'.<sup>117</sup>

The two men remained close friends, publicly scratching each other's backs, right up until the fifty-six year old author died of a heart attack on the morning of 12 August 1964. In June of that year, *Redbook* magazine, then described as a 'magazine for young adults', published an informal dialogue between them in which Dulles admitted he was pleased that Fleming had written about CIA officers in his Bond novels, particularly through the character of Felix Leiter, even if they were portrayed as junior partners in the transatlantic alliance: 'You were kind enough to begin introducing some of our CIA people into your books. In subordinate positions, of course. I say this very politely, you understand.'<sup>118</sup> Fleming paid Dulles the ultimate compliment by revealing he had written the former DCI into his next Bond novel 'Comparing you favourably with your successor [John McCone]'.<sup>119</sup> In the piece, the two friends opined on a range of intelligence matters, including the problems of running intelligence agencies under the glare of a free press and the value of allowing prisoner

exchanges, as had occurred in 1962 between American U-2 pilot Gary Powers and Soviet KGB Colonel Rudolf Abel at the now infamous Glienicke Bridge in Berlin. They also discussed the merits of hiring women as agents, as well as the security risks posed by civil servants whose ‘sexual perversions’ (Fleming’s phrase) could leave them vulnerable to blackmail. Unfortunately, it would be the last time the two parleyed together in public. After Fleming’s death, Dulles gave a eulogy in *Life* magazine on 28 August 1964, in which he spoke of their special acquaintance and clear influences upon each other’s work. With playful admiration, he concluded by saying that ‘Fleming’s imagination could go even higher’ than a U2 spy-plane, which operated at some 70,000 feet.<sup>120</sup> It was a gesture that his friend would have recognised and appreciated.

## V

It is time to put to bed the notion that Ian Fleming, in marked contrast to le Carré and other cerebral chroniclers of espionage who served in British intelligence, was an insignificant or juvenile actor in the spy business. Based on the available historical record, the reality is that his dealings with the real world of spies were far more extensive and important than has been acknowledged, encompassing not only the war years but also the inter-war period and the early Cold War.

As Godfrey’s right hand man, he was given a remarkable licence to coordinate with a host of secret government departments. At NID, he was not just *a* desk officer; he was *the* desk officer, who knew everything and everyone. Despite being notorious for their unwelcoming attitude toward interlopers from other corners of Whitehall, these departments saw him as Godfrey did, as a good mixer with outstanding administrative skills and bundles of initiative. Indeed, his former colleague Donald McCormick has written boldly that ‘He

would have made an admirable head of the British Secret Service'.<sup>121</sup> Throughout the war, Fleming was valued for his willingness to depart from traditional, linear, ways of thinking. While outlandish and worthy of fiction, the plans that he dreamed up to defeat Hitler earned him respect as creative-problem solver. So too his establishment of the 30 Unit Assault Squad, the dirty dozen of men who lived for danger and achieved notable successes in the lead up to, and in aid of, D-Day. He was – to quote Churchill – a ‘corkscrew thinker’; someone who believed that winning the war would require unpredictable behaviour. Allen Dulles was built the same way; hence his eagerness to seek Fleming’s counsel, even in the face of raised eyebrows and mild amusement among his colleagues at CIA.

Looking at Fleming’s intelligence ‘career’ as a whole, we are reminded of Scott Lucas’s concept of the ‘state-private network’, describing the cooperative relationship between the state and nominally independent civil society actors in pursuit of larger public goals, from intelligence gathering to consensus-building and the winning of hearts and minds.<sup>122</sup> During the war, Fleming served His Majesty’s Government (the state) to defeat the scourge of Nazism. But, on other occasions, like in the 1930s, as a freelance spy behind the Iron Curtain, or in the 1960s, as a confidante of Dulles, it is clear that he had one leg on each side of the state-private divide.

Through his rich interactions and experiences with the Western intelligence community, Fleming was able to invent a fiction rooted in the often-bizarre realities of a mysterious world deliberately hidden from public view. Indeed, without his involvement from the inside of the intelligence machine, it is hard to escape the conclusion that there would have been no 007, or at the very least, the franchise would have been a paler shadow of itself. One major reason why Bond in all its cultural forms has been so successful is because it is anchored in the veracity of the author’s own connections with the ‘real’ enterprise of intelligence. Fleming did not conceive his fictional hero amidst the lush foliage,

secluded nooks, and turquoise waters of his sunkissed Caribbean paradise, but in the snow-beaten, ice-covered, streets of 1930s Moscow and the tense, smoke-filled, government offices of London and Washington.

In September 1964, many intelligence officers attended Fleming's memorial service. They included Fleming's brother and wartime deception specialist Peter Fleming; poet and former military intelligence officer John Betjeman; NID colleague William Plomer; Bond producer and OSS veteran Harry Saltzman; plus several of the infamous 'Red Indians' such as Robert Harling.<sup>123</sup> It was a fitting tribute to someone who had played the game for over thirty years and whose legacy in shaping public perceptions of spying and the meaning of intelligence continues to this day.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ian Fleming to Alan Gabriel Barnsley, 21 April 1954, Alan Gabriel Barnsley Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Sutherland, *Lives of the Novelists*, 492.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 118.

<sup>4</sup> Conant, *Irregulars*, 85; Smith, *English Companion*, 97.

<sup>5</sup> See for example: Jeffery, *MI6*, 118-9, 479-80; Sisman, *John le Carré*.

<sup>6</sup> Conant, *Irregulars*, xviii.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel, "What is Social History," 47.

<sup>8</sup> This article has made particular use of the following memoirs and histories: Bryce, *You Only Live Once*; Harling, *Ian Fleming*; Lycett, *Ian Fleming*; Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*; McCormick, *17F*; Pearson, *Life of Ian Fleming*; Rankin, *Ian Fleming's Commandos*.

<sup>9</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 45.

<sup>10</sup> Fleming, *Golden Typewriter*, 352.

<sup>11</sup> Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow*, 284.

- 
- <sup>12</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 9.
- <sup>13</sup> Benjamin Welton, “The Legacy of a “Very Interesting War.”” <http://www.ianfleming.com/the-legacy-of-a-very-interesting-war>.
- <sup>14</sup> McCrisken and Moran, “James Bond.”
- <sup>15</sup> John le Carré, “Spy Story,” *New York Times Review of Books*, 12 March 1978.
- <sup>16</sup> West, “Fiction, Faction and Intelligence,” 279.
- <sup>17</sup> Lycett, *Fleming*, 58.
- <sup>18</sup> John Entwisle, “Ian Fleming – The Reuters Journalist who “gave us all a run for our money,”” *Blog Thomson Reuters*, 8 November 2012, <http://blog.thomsonreuters.com/index.php/ian-fleming-the-reuters-journalist-who-gave-us-all-a-run-for-our-money>.
- <sup>19</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 34-35; Fleming, *Playboy Interview*.
- <sup>20</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 73.
- <sup>21</sup> Stafford, *Silent Game*, 163.
- <sup>22</sup> Harling, *Fleming*, 211.
- <sup>23</sup> Rankin, *Ian Fleming’s Commandos*, 215.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> Fleming, *Golden Typewriter*, 5-6.
- <sup>28</sup> Lycett, *Ian Fleming*, 99.
- <sup>29</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 45.
- <sup>30</sup> Bryce, *You Only Live Once*, 127.
- <sup>31</sup> Scott’s Restaurant, “Our History,” <https://www.scotts-restaurant.com/our-history>.
- <sup>32</sup> Cabell, *Fleming’s Secret War*, 10.
- <sup>33</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 100.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.
- <sup>35</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 51.
- <sup>36</sup> Cawthorne, *Brief Guide to James Bond*, 14.
- <sup>37</sup> Moran, *Classified*, 258.
- <sup>38</sup> David Cox, “The Imitation Game: How Alan Turing Played Dumb to Fool US Intelligence,” *Guardian*, 28 November 2014.
- <sup>39</sup> Goodman, *Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*, 166.
- <sup>40</sup> For a detailed account of the insular nature of British intelligence between the wars see: Aldrich and Cormac, *Black Door*, 21-89.
- <sup>41</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 50.
- <sup>42</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 108.
- <sup>43</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 26.
- <sup>44</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 107.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat*.
- <sup>47</sup> Ian Fleming to John Godfrey, 12 September 1940 in Charles Morgan, “History of the Naval Intelligence and the Naval Intelligence Department 1939-42,” The National Archives (hereafter TNA) ADM 223/464.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> Smith, *Station X*, 71; Cox, “Imitation Game.”
- <sup>50</sup> Ian Fleming, “Proposal for Naval Intelligence Commando Unit,” 20 March 1942, TNA ADM 223/500.

- 
- <sup>51</sup> “History of 30 Assault Unit,” 1947, TNA ADM 223/214.
- <sup>52</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 56.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> Harling, *Fleming*, 189.
- <sup>55</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 103.
- <sup>56</sup> For information on how the United States became a spying superpower, including reflections on the British role in this process, see: Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*; Troy, *Wild Bill and Intrepid*; Smith, *Shadow Warriors*; Smith, “American Road to Central Intelligence”; Jeffreys-Jones, “Why was the CIA Established.”
- <sup>57</sup> Kruh, “Gentleman’s Mail.”
- <sup>58</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*; Andrew, *Secret World*.
- <sup>59</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 10.
- <sup>60</sup> See Goodman, “Anglo-American Intelligence Sharing,” esp. 1-3.
- <sup>61</sup> Fleming, *Playboy Interview*.
- <sup>62</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 121.
- <sup>63</sup> Macintyre, *For Your Eyes Only*, 73. More detail about Fleming’s relationship with Stephenson can be found here: Stafford, *Silent Game*, 165-169.
- <sup>64</sup> Fleming, *Casino Royale*, 168.
- <sup>65</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 126-127.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 67.
- <sup>68</sup> Bryce, *You Only Live Once*, 54
- <sup>69</sup> Document courtesy of Mike Van Blaricum, President of the Ian Fleming Foundation, Santa Barbara, CA, USA.
- <sup>70</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 71.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> Moran, “Early Public Profile of the CIA,” 130.
- <sup>74</sup> Jeffreys-Jones, “Why was the CIA Established in 1947?” ; Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*; Smith, *Shadow Warriors*.
- <sup>75</sup> Pearson, *Fleming*, 150.
- <sup>76</sup> Harling, *Fleming*, 262.
- <sup>77</sup> West, *A – Z of British Intelligence*, 185.
- <sup>78</sup> Lycett, *Fleming*, 169; Keeble, “Hacks and spooks,” 95.
- <sup>79</sup> Mark Edmonds, “My Secret Life at the Sunday Times,” *The Times*, 14 October 2012.
- <sup>80</sup> Phillip Knightley, “Letters to the Editor,” *Guardian*, 24 May 2008.
- <sup>81</sup> McCormick, *17F*, 123-41; Lycett, *Fleming*, 169.
- <sup>82</sup> “Malcolm Muggeridge Diary, Entry: Friday 9 January 1953,” Malcolm Muggeridge Papers, Collection Number 80084, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, USA.
- <sup>83</sup> Allen Barra, “Bond, by the Book,” 25 November 2006, [https://www.salon.com/2006/11/25/fleming\\_3](https://www.salon.com/2006/11/25/fleming_3).
- <sup>84</sup> Frank Mclynn, “Sir Fitzroy Maclean Bt: Obituary,” 19 June 1996.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> Photograph in Private Papers of Sir Fitzroy Maclean, MSS 11487, Box 79, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.
- <sup>87</sup> Ian Fleming to Jonathan Cape, 3 May 1949, Private Papers of Sir Fitzroy Maclean, MSS 11487, Box 13, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.



- 
- <sup>88</sup> Ian Fleming to Fitzroy Maclean, 12 May 1950, Private Papers of Sir Fitzroy Maclean, MSS 11487, Box 13, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia; Fitzroy Maclean to Ian Fleming, 16 May 1950, Private Papers of Sir Fitzroy Maclean, MSS 11487, Box 13, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.
- <sup>89</sup> Ian Fleming to Colin Gubbins, 7 July 1949, Private Papers of Major-General Sir Colin Gubbins, 12618, File 3/2/46, Imperial War Museum, London.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*; Ian Fleming to Colin Gubbins, 17 October 1949, Private Papers of Major-General Sir Colin Gubbins, 12618, File 3/2/46, Imperial War Museum, London.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> For an in-depth look at the genesis of Foot's work see Murphy, "Origins of SOE in France."
- <sup>94</sup> Lycett, *Fleming*, 169.
- <sup>95</sup> Ian Fleming to Ernest Cuneo, 1 June 1961, reprinted in Fleming, *Golden Typewriter*, 89-90.
- <sup>96</sup> Yardley, *Education of a Poker Player*.
- <sup>97</sup> Fleming, *Diamond Smugglers*.
- <sup>98</sup> Hyde, *Quiet Canadian*.
- <sup>99</sup> The Fleming-Dulles friendship has already been the subject of numerous studies, including: Moran, "Early Public Profile of the CIA," esp. 139-144; McCrisken & Moran, "James Bond," esp. 12-14. Readers keen to discover more about the so-called 'Golden Age' might wish to consult: Grose, *Gentleman Spy*; Ranelagh, *The Agency*, esp. 357-409; Jeffreys-Jones, *American Democracy*, esp. chapter 5.
- <sup>100</sup> Allen Dulles, "Our Spy-Boss Who Loved James Bond," *Life*, 28 August 1964.
- <sup>101</sup> Grose, *Gentleman Spy*, 451; Kinzer, *Brothers*, 237.
- <sup>102</sup> Kinzer, *Brothers*, 274.
- <sup>103</sup> Fleming, *Golden Typewriter*, 352.
- <sup>104</sup> Dulles, "Our Spy-Boss Who Loved James Bond."
- <sup>105</sup> "A Redbook Dialogue: Allen Dulles and Ian Fleming," *Redbook*, June 1964.
- <sup>106</sup> See Wilford, *Mighty Wurlitzer*.
- <sup>107</sup> Allen Dulles to Ian Fleming, 24 April 1963, L. Russell MSS, Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Lilly Library, Indiana University.
- <sup>108</sup> Gore Vidal, "The Art and Arts of E. Howard Hunt," *The New York Review of Books*, 13 December 1973.
- <sup>109</sup> Dulles, "Spy-Boss Who Loved James Bond."
- <sup>110</sup> John Pearson, "An Evening with JFK," *Globe*, 27 January 1967; Riebling, *Wedge*, 162; Russo, *Live by the Sword*.
- <sup>111</sup> Pearson, "Evening with JFK."
- <sup>112</sup> Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 150.
- <sup>113</sup> "Books of Human Bondage," *Time*, 13 April 1962.
- <sup>114</sup> For details about Dulles's personal efforts to rehabilitate the CIA's public image see: Willmetts, "Burgeoning Fissures."
- <sup>115</sup> Fleming, *Thunderball*, 77.
- <sup>116</sup> Fleming, *You Only Live Twice*, 30.
- <sup>117</sup> Fleming, *Man with the Golden Gun*, 183.
- <sup>118</sup> "A Redbook Dialogue: Allen Dulles and Ian Fleming," *Redbook*, June 1964.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>120</sup> Allen Dulles, "Our Spy-Boss Who Loved James Bond," *Life*, August 28, 1964.

---

<sup>121</sup> McCormick, 17F, 18.

<sup>122</sup> Lucas, *Freedom's War*.

<sup>123</sup> "Memorial Service for Ian Fleming," *Glasgow Herald*, 16 September 1964; Harling, *Fleming*, 359.

## **Bibliography**

Aldrich, Richard and Rory Cormac, *The Black Door: Spies, Secret Intelligence and British Prime Ministers*. London: Harper Collins, 2016.

Bryce, Ivar. *You Only Live Once: Memories of Ian Fleming*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1975.

Cannadine, David. *In Churchill's Shadow*. London: Penguin, 2002.

Cabell, Craig. *Ian Fleming's Secret War: The Real-Life Inspiration behind the James Bond Novels*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2008.

Cawthorne, Nigel. *A Brief Guide to James Bond*. London: Little Brown, 2012.

Fleming, Ian. *Ian Fleming: The Playboy Interview (50 Years of the Playboy Interview)*. Playboy, online 8 November 2012.

– *Casino Royale*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1953.

– *The Diamond Smugglers*. New York: Macmillan, 1958.

– *Thunderball*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1961.

– *You Only Live Twice*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1964.

– *The Man with the Golden Gun*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1965.

Fleming, Fergus. *The Man with the Golden Typewriter*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Goodman, Michael. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014.

– "The Foundations of Anglo-American Intelligence Sharing." *Studies in Intelligence*, 50:2 (2015): 1-12.

Grose, Peter. *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

Harling, Robert. *Ian Fleming: A Personal Memoir*. London: Robson Press, 2015.

Hyde, Montgomery. *The Quiet Canadian: The Secret Service Story of Sir William Stephenson*. London: H. Hamilton, 1962.

Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. *The CIA and American Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

– "Why was the CIA Established in 1947?" *Intelligence and National Security*, 12:1 (January 1997): 21-40.

Evan Thomas. *Robert Kennedy: His Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Kinzer, Stephen. *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and their Secret World War*. New York: Times Books, 2013.

Keeble, Richard Lance. "Hacks and spooks – Close Encounters of a Strange Kind: A Critical History of the Links between Mainstream Journalists and the Intelligence Services in the UK." In *The Political Economy of Media and Power*, edited by Jeffery Klaehn, 87-112. New York: Peter Lang, 2010.

Lucas, Scott. *Freedom's War: The US Crusade against the Soviet Union, 1945-56*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

Macintyre, Ben. *For Your Eyes Only: Ian Fleming and James Bond*. London: Bloomsbury, 2008.

- 
- *Operation Mincemeat: The True Spy Story that Changed the Course of the War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2010.
- McCormick, Donald. *17F: The Life of Ian Fleming*. London: Peter Owen, 1993.
- McCrisken, Trevor, and Christopher Moran. “James Bond, Ian Fleming, and Intelligence: Breaking Down the Boundary Between the ‘Real’ and the ‘Imagined’.” *Intelligence and National Security* (published online 9 May 2018): <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2018.1468648>.
- Moran, Christopher. *Classified: Secrecy and the State in Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- “Ian Fleming and the Early Public Profile of the CIA.” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 15:1 (Winter 2013): 119-146.
- Murphy, Christopher. “The Origins of SOE in France.” *The Historical Journal*, 46:4 (December 2003): 935-952.
- Pearson, John. *The Life of Ian Fleming*. London: The Companion Book Club, 1966.
- Ranelagh, John. *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986.
- Rankin, Nicholas. *Ian Fleming’s Commandos: The Story of 30 Assault Unit in WWII*. London: Faber and Faber, 2011. Rasenberger, Jim. *The Brilliant Disaster: JFK, Castro and America’s Doomed Invasion of Cuba*. New York: Scribner, 2011.
- Riebling, Wedge. *From Pearl Harbor to 9/11: How the Secret War between the FBI and CIA has Endangered National Security*. London: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Russo, Gus. *Live by the Sword: The Secret War against Castro and the Death of JFK*. Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 1998.
- Samuel, Raphael. “What is Social History?” In *What is history Today?*, edited by Juliet Gardiner, 42-47. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1988.
- Smith, Bradley. *Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
- Smith, Malcolm. *Station X: The Codebreakers of Bletchley Park*. London: Channel 4 Books, 1998.
- Stafford, David. *The Silent Game: The Real World of Imaginary Spies*. London: Viking, 1988.
- Sutherland, John. *Lives of the Novelists: A History of Fiction in 294 Lives*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Troy, Thomas. *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the CIA*. Frederick, MD: University Publications, 1981.
- West, Nigel. “Fiction, Faction and Intelligence.” *Intelligence and National Security*, 19:2(2004): 275-289.
- *The A – Z of British Intelligence*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.
- Wilford, Hugh. *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Willmetts, Simon. “The Burgeoning Fissures of Discontent: Allen Dulles and the Selling of the CIA in the Aftermath of the Bay of Pigs.” *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 100:340 (April 2015): 167-188.
- Yardley, Herbert. *The Education of a Poker Player*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957.

